

Dear President Trump,

We are writing to express our support for immediate assistance to our region's pork producers. There is no doubt that COVID-19 has had an unprecedented and unpredictable impact across industries. However, since passage of the CARES Act, supply chain disruptions have presented major threats to the future of the pork producing industry.

Over the past month, hog futures have plummeted by more than 30 percent, down to their lowest point in over 15 years. Restaurants closing their doors and the broader drop in public demand have largely fueled this decrease. However, recent processing plant closures in the Upper Midwest has severed a critical supply chain, leaving pork producing farms with nowhere to turn. Thousands of hog farmers are taking drastic measures to slow the growth cycle of their animals but are unfortunately facing the prospect of a processing capacity incapable of accepting our inventory. These unprecedented challenges require the attention and immediate assistance from both Congress and federal agencies.

While the recent announcement of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) is welcome news to farmers across the country, its announcement preceded the recent and unanticipated closures of pork processing plants and therefore did not consider these recent developments. Under the program, hog farmers receive as little as \$4 per hog in assistance. However, these farmers are facing more than ten times that amount in losses. Additionally, limiting assistance through entity rules and payment limits severely undermines the impact of the program for hog farmers. While we remain committed to providing USDA with resources through the CARES Act and future appropriations, we also urge reconsideration of these limitations, which will drastically improve the impact that the program can have on the pork industry.

Additionally, we urge the mobilization of existing farm programs in order to provide additional resources to hog farmers facing these dire circumstances. Congress' creation of the agricultural safety net did not contemplate the unprecedented nature of global pandemics such as COVID-19. Targeted, specific regulatory clarifications could open up additional dollars while remaining consistent with USDA's mission.

We appreciate USDA's dedication to assisting farmers and ranchers during this outbreak, but recent developments in the Midwest pork supply chain require additional, expeditious action. The pork industry is part of the lifeblood of our rural communities, and in many cases the largest economic driver of our Midwest towns and communities. It is critically important that together we take steps to keep the pork supply chain moving and providing our hog farmers the resources they need to endure the downtime. Thank you for your continued efforts to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on U.S. agriculture and for your prompt attention to our request.

Sincerely,